

# EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE DENTAL HEALTHCARE EDUCATION IN INDIA: MIXED METHOD STUDY



## INTRODUCTION:

**Climate change** and **over exploitation** of natural resources pose significant **global health threats** in 21st century. Our current healthcare professional education system is inadequately equipped to prepare future students for addressing this crisis and understanding their roles in mitigating its impact.

## AIM OF THE STUDY:

This mixed method study intends to explore Dental Students' knowledge, awareness and curriculum towards SDH along with Dental Faculty perceptions, strategies of integration of **sustainable dental healthcare (SDH)** into existing dental curriculum.

## METHODOLOGY:

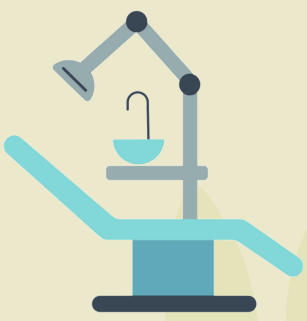
Anonymous **survey** using a novel, close ended, & structured instrument consisting of four domains: demographics, environmental impact, current teaching and future teaching strategies was conducted among **250 clinical dental students in 3rd and 4th year**.

A structured **in-depth interview guide** was developed to understand the perception, current training, challenges and strategies for implementation in dental curriculum is being collected from **15 dental faculty** from different specialities.



## PILOT RESULTS:

- 238 students completed the survey
- 98% of participants believed that climate change is a concern and **only 3.8% thought they have been formally taught SDH**.
- Around **69.5%** considered environmentally friendly strategies were expensive.
- **78.6%** believe that future teaching should be incorporated in early years,
- **78%** of participants preferring a **mix of offline and online modules** along with **field visits and Guest Lectures** as methods of teaching.
- In-depth interview is in process and data will be presented later.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

India with 300+ Dental Colleges is training 30000+ dental graduates annually and **need to reorient dental curriculum** to incorporate SDH on an urgent basis.

Recommendations to Dental Council of India:

- **Comprehensive and Experiential Learning** structured, validated module for dental undergraduates in India.
- Module should start in early years and should include field visits, guest lectures and active participation of students.